2026 STUDENT RESEARCH GUIDE

# Caribbean Medical Schools

## A practical guide for future medical students

How to compare accreditation, admissions, tuition, clinical training, USMLE preparation and residency pathways before you apply.

Independent educational resource • Updated August 2026

**Start with verified information**
A medical school decision can affect licensing eligibility, residency options, finances and years of professional training. Use this guide to build a shortlist, then verify each school through official regulatory and institutional sources.

**Research hub:** CaribbeanMedicalSchools.com

ORIENTATION

# Understanding Caribbean Medical Schools

Caribbean medical schools are not one uniform category. Programs differ substantially in accreditation, admission standards, curriculum, clinical placements, cost, academic support and graduate pathways.

## Why students consider the Caribbean

Students from the United States, Canada and other countries may explore Caribbean medical education for a variety of reasons: different entry pathways, multiple application cycles, international learning environments, or a desire to pursue an MD degree outside their home country. The important point is not whether a school is “Caribbean,” but whether its specific program aligns with your licensing, training and career objectives.

## Who this guide is for

- Premedical students comparing medical schools outside the United States or Canada.
- Applicants who want to understand accreditation, recognition and ECFMG-related eligibility before applying.
- Students evaluating US clinical rotations, USMLE preparation and possible U.S. residency pathways.
- International applicants comparing tuition, living costs, admissions requirements and student support.
- Parents or advisers helping a student make a structured, evidence-based medical education decision.

**A useful rule**
Do not choose a medical school because of a single headline claim, location, tuition figure or admission promise. Compare the full pathway from admission through graduation, licensing and postgraduate training.

## Questions to answer before you apply

| | |
|---|---|
| **Accreditation & eligibility**<br>Is the school appropriately accredited, and does its World Directory listing include the relevant ECFMG Sponsor Note for your graduation years? | **Clinical education**<br>Where are core and elective rotations completed, and what is the school’s role in arranging them? |
| **Outcomes**<br>Does the school publish clear, verifiable data on progression, examinations, graduation and residency placement? | **Total cost**<br>What is the likely total cost of attendance, not just the advertised tuition rate? |
| **Academic support**<br>How does the program support students before high-stakes exams and during clinical training? | **Career destination**<br>Will the degree and training pathway support the country or jurisdiction where you intend to practise? |
| **Admissions fit**<br>Do your prerequisites, academic record and test history match the school’s current entry requirements? | **Student support**<br>What academic advising, wellbeing, immigration, housing and career services are available? |

DECISION FRAMEWORK

# 8 Factors to Compare Before Choosing a School

A disciplined comparison helps separate marketing claims from factors that can materially affect your medical education and future licensing pathway.

1. **Accreditation and regulatory standing**
   Identify the relevant medical education accreditor, institutional regulator and any country-specific recognition that matters for your future practice.

2. **ECFMG and World Directory status**
   For students targeting U.S. training, confirm the school's World Directory entry and the applicable ECFMG Sponsor Note, including eligible graduation years.

3. **Curriculum and progression**
   Review program length, preclinical structure, promotion standards, remediation policies, attendance expectations and how students transition into clinical sciences.

4. **Clinical rotations**
   Ask where core clerkships and electives take place, how sites are selected, whether placements are guaranteed, and what supervision and evaluation systems are used.

5. **USMLE preparation**
   Compare curricular alignment, question-bank access, academic coaching, dedicated preparation time and how the school reports examination outcomes.

6. **Graduate and residency outcomes**
   Look for recent, clearly defined outcome data. Understand the denominator, the time period and whether results apply to all graduates or only selected groups.

7. **Cost and financing**
   Calculate tuition, fees, insurance, housing, travel, exam costs, clinical relocation costs and residency-application expenses across the full program.

8. **Student services and fit**
   Consider advising, tutoring, wellbeing support, immigration help, housing, campus safety, class size, learning culture and accessibility of faculty.

ACCREDITATION & RECOGNITION

# What “Accredited” Should Mean in Your Research

Accreditation, school listing, government recognition and professional eligibility are related concepts, but they are not interchangeable. Verify each one separately.

## 1. Accreditation

Accreditation evaluates a medical education program against defined standards. The accrediting organization, the scope of accreditation and the current status all matter. Students should check the accreditor’s own website rather than relying only on a school’s marketing materials.

## 2. World Directory listing

The World Directory of Medical Schools is an important reference, but a listing by itself does not mean that the school is accredited, recognized or endorsed. The World Directory explicitly states this distinction.

## 3. ECFMG eligibility for U.S.-bound students

ECFMG advises international students and graduates to confirm that their medical school meets ECFMG requirements. A school that meets those requirements is identified in the World Directory with an ECFMG Sponsor Note, which also specifies the relevant graduation years. If U.S. residency is part of your plan, this is a critical verification step.

> **Do not rely on abbreviations alone**
> Terms such as “listed,” “recognized,” “approved” and “accredited” can refer to different systems. Always identify the organization, jurisdiction, current status, dates and practical consequence for your intended career pathway.

## Verification checklist

- Search the school in the World Directory of Medical Schools.
- Open the Sponsor Notes tab and confirm any ECFMG eligibility information and graduation years relevant to you.
- Verify the school’s claimed accreditor on the accreditor’s own website.
- Check the medical council or licensing authority in the country where you eventually intend to practise.
- Save dated screenshots or PDFs of critical eligibility information before making a major financial commitment.

## Official verification resources

ECFMG Certification Overview • World Directory of Medical Schools • USMLE Eligibility

ADMISSIONS

# Caribbean Medical School Requirements

Admission requirements vary by institution and pathway. A more flexible admissions model does not make the medical curriculum easy; successful students still need a strong academic foundation and sustained study discipline.

## Common application components

- College or university transcripts and evidence of required science coursework.
- A personal statement explaining motivation, preparation and career goals.
- Letters of recommendation or academic/professional references.
- An interview, which may assess communication, motivation, professionalism and readiness for medical training.
- MCAT results for schools or applicant categories that require them; policies differ, so verify the current rule directly.
- English-language proficiency documentation where applicable for international applicants.

## Questions to ask the admissions office

| Topic | Ask this |
|---|---|
| **Prerequisites** | Which courses are mandatory, recommended or eligible for substitution? |
| **MCAT policy** | Is the MCAT required for every applicant, certain applicant groups, or not at all? |
| **Entry point** | Does the school offer a four-year MD only, or premedical/foundation pathways as well? |
| **Transfers** | Are transfer credits considered, and how are prior medical-school credits evaluated? |
| **Intakes** | How many start dates are offered each year, and do clinical timelines differ by intake? |
| **Selection** | What academic and non-academic factors are used in admission decisions? |

**Academic readiness matters**
Before accepting an offer, ask how the school identifies students who need academic support, what remediation looks like, and whether progression policies are published clearly in the student handbook.

CLINICAL TRAINING

# US Clinical Rotations, USMLE and the Residency Pathway

For students considering U.S. postgraduate training, clinical education and examination eligibility deserve close scrutiny before enrollment.

## Clinical rotations: what to verify

- Where do core clerkships and electives take place, and are those placements documented?
- Are required rotations available within the expected timeline, and how much relocation is typical?
- How are students supervised, assessed and supported at clinical sites?
- What elective opportunities support specialties or locations relevant to your residency goals?

## A simplified U.S.-bound pathway

**1** **Confirm school eligibility**
Verify the medical school's World Directory listing and ECFMG Sponsor Note before planning around U.S. certification.

**2** **Complete medical education**
Meet your school's academic, clinical and graduation requirements.

**3** **Meet ECFMG examination requirements**
For international medical graduates, Step 1 and Step 2 CK remain part of the medical science examination requirements for ECFMG Certification.

**4** **Complete other ECFMG requirements**
Clinical and communication skills requirements, credential verification and other applicable certification requirements must also be satisfied.

**5** **Apply for residency**
Eligible graduates may apply to U.S. residency programs, but residency placement is competitive and is never guaranteed by medical-school admission.

**6** **Continue toward licensure**
After entering graduate medical education, additional requirements such as Step 3 and state-specific licensing rules apply.

RESIDENCY PLANNING

# Read Outcomes Carefully

Residency results can be useful, but only when the school explains who is included, what time period is covered and how the outcome is defined.

**Important**
A school can support USMLE preparation and residency advising, but no school can guarantee a residency position. Applicants should evaluate published outcomes carefully and understand how each statistic is defined.

## Questions to ask about residency data

- What graduating class or application cycle does the statistic represent?
- Is the denominator all graduates, all residency applicants, or only students who met selected criteria?
- Does the school distinguish first-time matches from later placements?
- Are specialties and training locations published so applicants can understand the pattern of outcomes?
- Can the school provide the methodology used to calculate any advertised match or placement rate?

## Prepare for the pathway, not just the exam

Strong exam preparation matters, but residency applications also involve clinical performance, letters, specialty choice, application strategy, interviews, timing and program-specific selection. Ask how advising supports the full process rather than focusing only on a single test score.

**Use official rules as the baseline**
ECFMG, USMLE and state licensing requirements may change. Build your plan around current official guidance and confirm that your school remains eligible for the pathway you intend to pursue.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

# Tuition Is Only One Part of the Cost

The most useful comparison is the estimated total cost of attendance from enrollment through graduation and residency application, not a single semester's tuition figure.

## Build a full-cost estimate

| Cost category | Examples | Why it matters |
|---|---|---|
| **Academic** | Basic-science tuition, clinical tuition, registration and administrative fees | Rates may differ between preclinical and clinical phases. |
| **Examinations** | USMLE fees, preparation resources, travel to test centers | Exam-related costs can occur at several points in the program. |
| **Living** | Housing, food, utilities, local transportation, insurance | Costs can change when students relocate for clinical rotations. |
| **Travel & immigration** | Flights, visa or permit costs, document processing | International students may face recurring travel and documentation expenses. |
| **Clinical phase** | Relocation, commuting, temporary housing, required equipment | Clinical placements may be distributed across multiple locations. |
| **Residency application** | Application services, interviews, travel, documentation | Final-year career costs should be included in long-term planning. |

## Red flags during your research

- Pressure to pay a large non-refundable amount before you can review key policies or eligibility information.
- Accreditation claims that do not name the accrediting body or cannot be verified independently.
- Residency or USMLE statistics without a clear year, denominator, student population or definition.
- Unclear clinical rotation arrangements, especially if required clerkships or timelines are not documented.
- A major gap between advertised tuition and the likely total cost once fees, living expenses and relocation are included.
- Promises that imply licensing or residency is automatic after graduation.

**Financial due diligence**
Request the current tuition schedule, mandatory-fee list, refund policy and estimated living costs in writing. Build a conservative budget that includes delays, travel and relocation.

RESEARCH TOOLS

# A 30-Minute Shortlist Method

Use the same evidence checklist for every school. Consistency makes it easier to compare options and identify missing information.

1. **5 min - Identity & location**
   Confirm the school’s legal name, campus location, degree awarded and program length.

2. **5 min - Accreditation**
   Verify current accreditation and regulatory status through the relevant authority.

3. **5 min - ECFMG/WDOMS**
   For U.S.-bound students, check the World Directory entry and Sponsor Notes.

4. **5 min - Clinicals**
   Record where core rotations occur and whether the school publishes formal clinical affiliations.

5. **5 min - Outcomes**
   Collect recent examination, graduation and residency information with definitions and dates.

6. **5 min - Cost & fit**
   Estimate total cost, then note admissions requirements, academic support and student services.

PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

# Simple School-Comparison Scorecard

Use one copy per school. Mark each factor only after you have verified the relevant information from a credible source.

## Simple school-comparison scorecard

| Factor | Strong | Mixed | Needs verification |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Accreditation & recognition** | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| **ECFMG/WDOMS status** | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| **Admissions fit** | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| **Curriculum & support** | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| **Clinical rotations** | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| **USMLE support** | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| **Graduate outcomes** | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| **Total cost** | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| **Student services** | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| **Career-pathway fit** | ○ | ○ | ○ |

FAQ

# Frequently Asked Questions

Short answers to common questions. Requirements can change, so use these as research prompts rather than substitutes for current official guidance.

### What are Caribbean medical schools?

They are medical schools located in Caribbean countries and territories that provide medical education leading to qualifications such as an MD. Program structure, accreditation, admissions and clinical arrangements vary widely.

### Are all Caribbean medical schools accredited?

No. Accreditation and recognition differ by institution. Verify the specific school and accreditor directly, including current dates and scope.

### Can graduates pursue U.S. residency?

Potentially, if they satisfy applicable ECFMG, examination, residency-application and other eligibility requirements. Residency selection is competitive and not guaranteed.

### Do Caribbean medical schools require the MCAT?

Policies vary by school and applicant category. Some require the MCAT in certain circumstances, while others use different admissions criteria.

### Are Caribbean medical schools easier to get into?

Some schools may use different admissions thresholds or pathways than highly selective U.S. schools, but medical training remains academically demanding and progression standards matter.

### How should I compare tuition?

Compare total cost of attendance, including preclinical and clinical tuition, fees, housing, travel, examinations, insurance, relocation and residency-application expenses.

### Why do clinical rotations matter?

Clinical training affects hands-on experience, specialty exposure, logistics and preparation for postgraduate training. Ask where rotations occur and how the school manages placements.

### What should I verify first?

Start with accreditation, World Directory information, ECFMG eligibility where relevant, degree/licensing implications, clinical training arrangements and total cost.

RESOURCES

# Continue Your Research

Use independent comparison resources to build questions, then verify critical eligibility and licensing information through official sources.

## Independent Caribbean medical school research

For school profiles, comparison guides, admissions topics, accreditation explainers, clinical-rotation research and other applicant resources, visit **CaribbeanMedicalSchools.com**.

For additional applicant and student discussions, **ValueMD** can be useful for identifying questions to investigate. Treat forum posts as personal experiences, not as substitutes for official regulatory or institutional information.

## Official sources to bookmark

**ECFMG Certification**
Medical-school requirements and ECFMG Certification information for international medical students and graduates.

**World Directory of Medical Schools**
School listings and Sponsor Notes. Remember: directory listing by itself is not accreditation or endorsement.

**USMLE Eligibility**
Current eligibility framework for Step examinations.

**USMLE Path to Licensure**
Overview of the sequence for students and graduates of international medical schools pursuing the U.S. pathway.

**Final reminder**
Medical-school accreditation, examination policies, certification requirements and licensing rules can change. Verify current information directly with the relevant school, accreditor, ECFMG/Intealth, USMLE and the licensing authority for your intended jurisdiction.

### About this guide

This independent educational guide is designed to help prospective students ask better questions when comparing Caribbean medical schools. It does not rank institutions, guarantee eligibility, provide legal or licensing advice, or replace official information from regulators, accrediting bodies, examination organizations or individual medical schools.

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